



CITY OF EUREKA City Manager

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PRESS RELEASE – March 18, 2016

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The City has set a date of **May 2, 2016** for individuals camping behind the Bayshore Mall to leave the area. “Trail construction is set to begin mid-May 2016 and in order to protect individuals the area must be vacated.” Mayor Frank Jäger stated. The City will be working with the County Department of Health and Human Services and other local service providers to coordinate efforts to assist those camping in the marsh to obtain temporary housing, bus tickets back to family, or other services such as treatment options for drug or alcohol abuse.

In addition, the City will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) next Friday, March 25, 2016, for any individuals or organizations who are interested and qualified to execute an “exit strategy” for relocation of the homeless population in the areas slated for construction. The plan will be limited to a duration of six (6) months and minimum qualifications will include an operations plan, a safety/security plan, a staffing plan, a schedule, and a budget. No City funding or other resources will be provided.

The City wishes to confirm, however, that removal of people will still occur on May 2, 2016 even if an acceptable proposal is or is not received. The RFP process is occurring separate and apart from the May 2 deadline. “People must be out of the marsh no later than that date so that construction can proceed,” noted City Manager, Greg Sparks. The RFP process will follow a different track and timeline.

According to Chief Andrew Mills, “For decades, the Palco Marsh area has been the site of crime and disorder beyond illegal camping. Reports to City staff, the police, and Councilmembers of violence, theft, human and drug trafficking have been frequent and persistent. EPD has made and continues to make arrests, seize firearms and consistently warn people living in and frequenting the area against criminal behavior. There is a compelling government interest to protect the City from this behavior. EPD will continue to work with DHHS, MIST and other organizations to provide housing to those who desire it.”

The City has also been faced with losing its insurance coverage in the marsh area due to a lawsuit filed by Kathleen Anderson, a local resident, who was allegedly injured in the marsh in an area known as the Drying Sheds. The City paid out \$400,000.00 to Ms. Anderson and the

City's insurer has indicated that if the Drying Sheds are not removed by this summer that the City will risk losing its insurance coverage for the area.

In addition, the City is very concerned about the environmental degradation that is taking place not only in the marsh areas but, also to Humboldt Bay. The City has been notified by several state agencies that the City needs to address the issues surrounding the homeless encampments or notices of violation could be issued. The Parks and Recreation Department who has been performing clean-ups of the area on a weekly basis has collected two 40-yard dumpsters each week for the past several months. "The amount collected has been consistent with no decrease in illegally dumped material. This past week we actually collected three 40-yard dumpsters, a significant increase from the previous weeks," according to the Parks and Recreation Department Director, Miles Slattery.

"For all of these reasons, the City must take swift and decisive action," said City Manager, Greg Sparks.